

SOCIALISM. The difficulty of defining socialism is apparent to anyone who attempts to study this protean doctrine, not least because what socialism is or is not is usually a matter of contentious debate. However, there is a general consensus that the various schools of socialism share some common features that can be summarized as follows. Socialism is above all concerned with the relationship between the individual, state, and society. For the socialist, the individual is never alone and thus must always define himself or herself in relation to others. Socialists believe that a well-ordered society cannot exist without a state apparatus, not least because the state is seen as the most effective vehicle for coordinating and administering to the needs of all.

Socialists' views on human nature distinguish them from their principal political rivals, the liberals and conservatives. While the latter two groups tend to hold that all humans are inherently self-interested and materialistic, socialists contend that these traits are products of social conditioning under capitalism. On this view, individuals act selfishly and competitively, not because it is in their nature to do so, but rather because they are encouraged and rewarded for such behavior. Socialists hold that the values and beliefs promoted in a socialist society would enhance our capacity for acting cooperatively and collectively in pursuit of mutually reinforcing material and spiritual goals.

Because they see material circumstances as being key to the well-being of individuals, socialists stress the importance of the economic system that operates in every society. It was their observations of the deleterious effects of industrial capitalism that caused socialist reformers to call for the development of new economic structures based on a completely different set of moral principles. The question of how the transition from capitalism to socialism would occur has been answered in different ways by different socialist theorists. Robert Owen (1771–1858), Charles Fourier (1772–1837), and other early socialist thinkers saw the need to reform rather than destroy capitalism, while followers of Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) insisted that capitalism had to be completely overturned in order for society to advance to a state of socialism. Contemporary socialists do not envisage the transition from capitalism to socialism as a sharp break, but as a process of economic reforms that takes into account the role of market forces.

So far as is known the terms *socialist* and *socialism* first appeared in print in Italian in 1803, but in a sense were entirely unconnected with any of their later meanings. No trace of the word *socialist* appears again until 1827, when it was used in the Owenite *Co-operative Magazine* to designate the followers of Robert Owen's cooperative doctrines. Across the English Channel, *socialisme* was adopted by the Saint-Simonians—followers of the French philosopher and social scientist Claude-Henri de Rouvroy (1760–1825), comte de Saint-Simon—during the 1830s to describe their theory, and thereafter it was increasingly used to refer to those groups aiming at some kind of new social order resting on an economic and social conception of human rights.

In these senses, socialism was used to distinguish the attitudes of those who laid stress on the social elements in human

relations from those who emphasized the claims of the individual. In fact, to be a socialist was to be someone who promoted a social system in direct opposition to the highly individualistic order being advocated by the proponents of *laissez faire* economics.

Industrial Revolution and the Rise of Socialism

As a political ideology, socialism arose largely in response to the economic and social consequences of the Industrial Revolution. There is an abundance of literature that attests to the dramatic way in which the industrialization of Europe affected the daily lives of individuals, particularly the working classes. The reformist trend in British politics during the 1830s brought some of these harsh realities to the public's attention. In 1832, for example, a parliamentary investigation into the conditions in the textile factories—later known as the Sadler Committee's Report—revealed the appalling toll on human life that had resulted from unregulated industrial growth. And, even if we discount certain embellishments or exaggerations, these accounts of the general working conditions in the factories were nonetheless all too illustrative of a social climate in which practices of the most callous inhumanity were accepted as a natural order of events and, most important, were at first not thought to be the general public's concern.

It deserves mention here that, in addition to the horrors wrought by an unregulated factory system, workers were also subjected to the changes brought on by the machine age. The introduction of new technologies in the workplace invariably meant the displacement of laborers. No less important was the fact that many of the changes wrought by rapid technological advances and the consequent restructuring of the workplace (e.g., the factory system) had an alienating effect on the worker. To the minds of some, however, these evils of industrialization were not inevitable outcomes. Such was the case with the so-called Utopian socialists who emerged in England and on the Continent around this time.

Utopian Socialists: Owen, Saint-Simon, Fourier

In the beginning there were basically three groups of socialists, although there were lesser groups representing broadly similar tendencies. The three principal groups were the Fourierists and Saint-Simonians in France and the Owenites in Great Britain. There were obvious similarities between them: (1) they regarded the social question as by far the most important of all; (2) insisted that it was the duty of all good men to promote the general happiness and welfare of everyone in society; (3) regarded this task as incompatible with the continuance of a social order that was maintained strictly on the basis of a competitive struggle between individuals for the means of living; and (4) were deeply distrustful of politics and politicians, believing that the future control of social affairs ought to lie not with parliaments or ministers or kings and queens but with the "producers." They held that, if the economic and social aspects of men's lives could be properly ordered, the traditional forms of government and political organization based on conflict and competitiveness would soon be superseded by a new world order of international peace and collaboration.

On the other hand, there were wide diversities separating these three groups. The Fourierists and Owenites were community-makers. They set out to establish a network of experimental communities based on their ideas that would become the foundation stones of a new social order. The Saint-Simonians differed from these two groups in that they were strong believers in the virtues of large-scale organizations and scientific planning. Their principal aim was to transform nations into great productive corporations dominated by a sort of “technocracy” composed of scientists and technicians. Unlike the Fourierists and Owenites, who eschewed political activity, the Saint-Simonians were not opposed to using the existing political channels as a means to bring about the transformations they were advocating.

Thus, at this juncture in its historical development, socialism meant collective regulation of the affairs of people on a cooperative basis, with the happiness and welfare of all as the ultimate goal, and with the main emphasis not on “politics” per se but on the production and distribution of wealth. Enemies of individualism, the socialists sought to strengthen the socializing influences that brought people together in a harmonious whole. They therefore emphasized education as an instrument for conditioning patterns of behavior, social attitudes, and beliefs.

It deserves mention that in this description of socialism nothing is said about the proletariat or the class struggle between it and the capitalist class. This is because the members of the aforementioned socialist schools did not think in these terms. They did not see capitalists and workers as rival classes, nor did they believe that a revolutionary struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie was necessary to put their social plans into effect.

“Scientific Socialism”

In following the historical analysis of socialism offered by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the modern socialist movement dates from the publication of their *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. The term *communism*, which came into common usage in this same period, was often used in connection with the idea of socialism, though the former tended to have a more militant connotation. This is most likely why it was used by the Communist League, the group that commissioned Marx and Engels to write the *Communist Manifesto*. As Engels later explained, the word *communism* carried with it the idea of common ownership, and, above all, it helped to distinguish the ideas of Marx and Engels from those of the so-called utopian socialists in that it lent itself better to association with the idea of the class struggle and with the materialistic conception of history.

The publication of the *Communist Manifesto* coincided with the revolutionary tide that swept through Europe between 1848 and 1849. Marx and Engels were still correcting the proofs of their soon-to-be famous pamphlet when the first barricades of 1848 were being erected in Paris. But while it is true that the *Manifesto* was published during a period of political tumult, it did not have a profound impact on the revolutionaries of the period. Nevertheless, it was an important document in the

history of socialism, above all because it presented in outline form the theoretical basis for modern socialism.

Perhaps the boldest and most probing argument advanced by Marx and Engels was their critique of present and past societies. According to this, society’s political and cultural arrangements (superstructure) are shaped primarily by the forces of material production (base). When the productive modes and relations have developed as far as they can within the existing framework of political and economic structures of society, then the conditions arise for a thoroughgoing social revolution, a process that inevitably brings about a transmutation of these older forms into more progressive ones. In this way, societies are able to advance progressively from more primitive states (e.g., feudalism) to more sophisticated ones (e.g., capitalism).

In their discussion of the relationship between state and class, Marx and Engels identify further dimensions of their “stages” view of history that were to become cornerstones of “scientific” socialism. According to them, the state is essentially a class-based institution, expressing the will and exclusive interests of the dominant political and economic groups in society. The state and its apparatuses are thus seen as essential features of the superstructure that overlays the economic base (which itself corresponds to the stage reached in the development of the powers of production). Under capitalism, the authors go on to say, the bourgeoisie seek both to expand their base—which is too narrow to accommodate the wealth created by them—and to overcome the economic crises caused by the development of productive forces beyond the point compatible with capitalism. By so doing, they begin to dig their own graves, for the scramble for new markets inevitably creates new problems that cannot possibly be resolved within the framework of the one created by the bourgeoisie. At this point, the *Manifesto* explains that it is the ongoing and ceaseless dialectical struggle between the dominant and dominated classes that provides the impetus for breaking down the barriers for further social and economic development. With the advent of revolution, the control of the state and its forms passes into the hands of the new dominant class (the working classes), thus paving the way for the development of new forces of production.

Another distinguishing aspect of the doctrine outlined in the *Manifesto* has to do with the special historical mission that Marx and Engels assigns to the proletariat. Unlike previous insurgent classes, which developed their importance and strength within the preceding social order, Marx and Engels contend that the laboring class under capitalism is driven to revolt through its own increasing misery. Once they have wrested political power from the middle classes, the authors believe that the proletariat will be able to establish their own hegemony (construed more concretely in later writings as a dictatorship). Over time, during which the material conditions are created for the construction of socialism, their class rule would give way to a classless and stateless society, communism.

As regards the relationship between communists and the working classes, Marx and Engels assert that communists were the most advanced and politically resolute segment of the proletariat in every nation, not least because they had the

advantage of seeing more clearly than others the direction in which society is moving. As revolutionaries, their role was to assist the exploited workers in three ways: (1) to raise their class consciousness so that they can realize their role in history; (2) to overthrow the bourgeoisie; and (3) to establish working-class control of the state and its ruling apparatuses (i.e., a dictatorship).

Having said all of this it is important to keep in mind that the *Manifesto* cannot be regarded as a full exposition of Marxist doctrine. And while Marx sketches out many of the basic tenets of his communist viewpoint, at this point in his career he had not worked out his complete system of thought, which was carefully developed over many years, culminating with the publication of his magnum opus, *Das Kapital*, in 1867. Nonetheless, it is significant to note that both Marx and Engels continued to endorse the views of the *Manifesto* even after most of them were rendered irrelevant by the course of events. The continuing relevance of this important document, then, had less to do with its predictive powers than with its potency as a clarion call for revolution. The *Manifesto* is full of memorable and moving phrases such as, “Workers of the World unite. You have nothing to lose but your Chains.” The teleological understanding of history presented in the *Manifesto* was also compelling to successive generations of socialists. In their “scientific” critique of the bourgeois society with which they were acquainted, Marx and Engels managed to invest history with both a dramatic purpose and a desirable destination. History was, according to them, moving toward a higher goal that could only be obtained through class struggle and social revolution. It was thus the moral message embedded in their theory of historical materialism that made the *Communist Manifesto* a landmark publication in the history of modern socialism.

Socialism during its “Mature” Phase

The genesis and development of socialism paralleled the rise of liberalism in Europe. Over the course of the nineteenth century, liberalism had become the predominant ideology in Great Britain and on the Continent. However, from 1889 on, socialism increasingly challenged liberalism’s supremacy in the political arena. In Europe generally there were various schools of socialist thought that came to maturity during the second half of the nineteenth century: reformist socialism, Marxism, anarchism, and syndicalism. Of these currents, Marxism tended to be the dominant socialist theory, partly because of its conceptual cogency and partly because it was embraced by the most powerful and influential social democratic parties affiliated with the Second (Socialist) International, (1889–1914), a confederation of socialist parties and labor organizations that was created in order to continue the work of the First International Workingmen’s Association.

Why did socialism become so important at this time? One of the contributing factors was the growing influence of positivism on the general outlook of European thinkers. Following in the tradition of the French Enlightenment, intellectuals like Auguste Comte (1798–1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) promoted the idea that an understanding of both the natural and social worlds could be achieved through scientific

knowledge. It was this belief that inspired socialists like Saint-Simon and Marx to develop political cosmologies that they thought could be grounded on a sound empirical basis. Marx in particular asserted in the *Communist Manifesto* and other major writings that his brand of socialism was distinguished from all others by its “scientific” approach to the study of economics and society. This is not to say that Marxists were the only socialists who were convinced of the scientific validity of their theories. Anarchist social views, particularly those espoused by the Russian revolutionary Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921), also owed a great deal to the positivist tradition. And, finally, the evolutionary brand of socialism known as Fabianism that developed in Great Britain at the end of the nineteenth century was shaped by the positivist beliefs of its leading theorists.

A general shift in the attitude toward the role of the state in society also contributed to the growth of socialism. The failure of laissez-faire political and economic policies, which had been long favored by liberal governments as a way to respond effectively to the problems created by the periodic crises of capitalism, the second wave of industrialization, and the emergence of a mass society caused many to see the state in a more favorable light. For example, the unexpected and occasionally jolting economic fluctuations of the 1870s and 1880s not only drove a wedge between the workers and their liberal middle-class representatives, but also alarmed industrialists and other members of the economic elite. As a result, an increasing number of all these groups started turning to the government for protection. The growing popularity of imperialism in the closing decades of the century also made the average person less opposed to the growing powers of the state.

Among the many other factors that favored the rise of socialism at this time, the most notable can be summarized as follows. (1) The increase in the number of workers in the industrializing nations was one important factor. The concentration of industries during the so-called second industrial revolution that occurred during the last two decades of the nineteenth century brought together workers in unprecedented numbers. Rapid industrialization also accelerated the tendency of the general population to move from the countryside into urban centers. Cities proved to be favorable environments for socialist organizations—which demanded a fairly sophisticated social/cultural infrastructure in order to thrive. (2) The rise of literacy also redounded to the benefit of the socialists: as more and more workers learned to read they were able to imbibe socialist ideas in the form of pamphlets, books, and the press. (3) The “democratization” of the ballot box also helped the socialists in that the extension of the franchise brought more workers into the political arena thus making it possible to get socialist deputies elected to parliament. All of these factors created the basis for a “proletarian” mentality or consciousness. By the late 1880s workers were joining clubs and trade unions, electing their own representatives, and subscribing to their own publications. And though this is not to say that all workers were necessarily socialist, it did mean that the principal vehicles for propagating and sustaining socialism were now anchored in the framework of modern industrial society.

The Spread of Marxism during 1880s

Of all the varieties of socialism that existed during this period, Marxism proved to be the most popular doctrine among working-class parties that began to emerge in the 1870s in France, Germany, Belgium, and elsewhere where there was a large industrial proletariat. In countries where industrialization had yet to be firmly established, Marxism was a minority tendency. This was particularly evident in Spain, where anarchism was a major force among both the industrial workers and the peasantry. Anarchism also attracted a sizeable following among peasants and workers in Italy, though it never achieved the mass following it did in Spain. In Russia, Marxism became important only after the turn of the century and even then it did not represent the largest segment of the socialist movement as a whole.

Beginning in the 1880s a special effort was made by Friedrich Engels to popularize Marx's theories, particularly among the growing reading public of workers. As far as Marx's general theories were concerned, this was no easy task, for, apart from intellectuals, few people could easily grasp the meanings of his probing analysis of capitalist development. In order to make such views more accessible, Engels set himself the task of defending Marxian theories against Marx's would-be critics. In *Anti-Dühring* and several of his better known works, Engels attempted to expand upon the views of his lifelong collaborator by stressing that Marxism was not just a revolutionary theory but a scientific worldview that lay bare the complexities of society. By arguing in this way, Engels hoped not only to discredit rival views of socialism but also to demonstrate the continuing relevance of Marx's theories. From a doctrinal point of view, Engels's most enduring legacy to socialism, however, was his materialist conception of history. More so than Marx, Engels saw the march of socialism as an inexorable historical process that could be predicted with almost mathematical certainty by correctly reading the "objective laws" that governed the evolution of both the natural world and society. He therefore suggested a view of socialist development that linked it to a general process of change that could be measured and read by means of empirical investigations.

The certitude of the causal explanatory model sketched out in Engels' writings on historical materialism appealed especially to the generation of socialists who came of age during the closing years of the nineteenth century, a period when positivism was at its height. Karl Kautsky (1854–1938), Eduard Bernstein (1850–1932), Georgy Plekhanov (1857–1918), and V. I. Lenin (1870–1924) were all indebted to Engels's elaboration of Marxist doctrine. No less a testament to Engels's impact on the future development of socialism is the fact that his materialist conception of history became an article of faith in all the regimes that declared themselves to be Marxist in the twentieth century.

The Anarchist Alternative

The anarchists represented one of the strongest non-Marxian currents in the socialist movement and it was their ongoing rivalry with the Marxists that kept alive the doctrinal debates and organizational divisions that characterized both the First (1864–1876) and Second Internationals (1889–1914).

Anarchism was never a homogenous ideological movement. At one time or another in the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries anarchists who belonged to the international socialist movement identified themselves as mutualists, collectivists, communists, and syndicalists. Yet, despite their theoretical differences, anarchists of all schools were united in their opposition to Marxism. Above all this was because of their diametrically opposed views of the role of the state. For the Marxists, the state was a necessary vehicle for governing society until full communism had been achieved. Once this stage of history had been reached, the state would, in the words of Engels, cease to be a useful instrument of rule and simply wither away. The anarchists completely rejected the notion that the state could serve any positive function. In sharp contrast to the Marxists, they believed that the working classes would overturn capitalism, not by wresting political power from the middle-classes, but by concentrating their energies in developing and organizing their own social institutions and by engaging continuously in an economic struggle against their oppressors.

Anarchists also opposed Marxism on the grounds that its communist principles were incompatible with the kind of libertarian society they envisaged. The Russian anarchist Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876) famously declared that he detested communism because, "it is the negation of liberty." He further accused Marx of promoting an authoritarian form of communism that "concentrates and absorbs all the powers of society into the state."

Since the anarchists abstained from politics and thus rejected the ballot box as a means of advancing the workers' cause, they were forced to adopt a revolutionary strategy that also placed them at odds with Marxists and reformist socialists. For this reason there are two main features of the movement that need to be mentioned: direct action tactics and violence. The former included such things as sabotage, strikes, and public demonstrations—May Day celebrations, for example. The anarchists' reliance on a tactic known as "propaganda by the deed" gave rise to the stock image of them—popularized by writers and social scientists like Joseph Conrad (1857–1924), Henry James (1843–1916), and Cesare Lombroso (1835–1909)—as social deviants who were bent on destroying the foundations of civilization. This overblown stereotype was reinforced by several widely publicized anarchist outrages that punctuated the last years of the nineteenth century. Apart from launching small-scale attacks against symbols of class, state, and religious rule, anarchists were responsible for the political assassinations of several heads of state. Within a span of only six years, the presidents of France (1894) and the United States (1901), the empress of Austria (1898), the prime minister of Spain (1897), and the king of Italy (1900) were murdered by anarchists. The stigma that all anarchists were now saddled with obscured the fact that these were isolated acts committed by only a handful of individuals. Most rank-and-file anarchists were strongly opposed to terrorism, and most saw education and trade unions as the main vehicles for conducting their revolutionary activity.

At the turn of the century anarchism, which had nearly died out in most areas of Europe, was revitalized by the

development of yet another brand of socialism known as revolutionary syndicalism. When Arturo Labriola (1873–1959), Émile Pouget (1860–1931), José Prat (d. 1932), and other libertarian thinkers began to marry the new doctrine (which emphasized trade unionism and direct action tactics like the general strike) to old anarchist beliefs the result was anarchosyndicalism, a movement that was particularly important in France, Spain, and Italy. In fact, it was the introduction of syndicalism that brought about the phenomenal growth of anarchism in Spain. Over the course of the next two decades, anarchosyndicalism became a mass movement, with its membership peaking at over 1.5 million members during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939).

Marxism Challenged

The anarchists were not the only ones to challenge the view that socialism was synonymous with Marxism. Toward the end of the nineteenth century there emerged several strands of “new” socialist thinking that developed outside the Marxist tradition. The most important of these was the brand of socialism known as Fabianism, which became an important movement in Great Britain after 1889. Originally comprised almost exclusively of upper-middle class intellectuals—notably, George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Annie Besant (1847–1933), and Beatrice Webb (1858–1943), and Sidney Webb (1859–1947)—the Fabian Society advocated a nonrevolutionary form of socialism that was shaped more by the ideas of Herbert Spencer (1820–1903), Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), James Mill (1773–1836), and John Stuart Mill (1806–1873) than it was by those inspired by Karl Marx. Unlike the Marxists, who saw historical progress in terms of class conflict, the Fabians conceived of society as an organism that evolved gradually over time. Socialism was, in their eyes, a natural outcome of social development, but one that needed to be guided by enlightened thinkers like themselves. Drawing upon their faith in positivist principles, the Fabians were convinced that a “scientific” approach to the study of social phenomena would produce an effective strategy for constructing incrementally a socialist society. By insisting that socialism could be achieved in a peaceful way, the Fabians set themselves against the Marxian parties of the Second International who conceptualized social change in terms of a dialectical struggle.

Revisionist Controversy on the Continent

The greatest challenge to Marxism at this time, however, came not from without but from within the Marxian current of socialism. Beginning in the late 1890s a diverse group of so-called revisionist thinkers increasingly questioned the validity of a number of fundamental Marxist tenets. They particularly objected to how rigidly Marx’s doctrine was being interpreted by his epigones in the Second International. The foremost theoretical spokesman of the revisionist movement was Eduard Bernstein. Bernstein was a German social democrat whose views on socialism had been influenced by his extended sojourns in Switzerland and particularly in England, where he became familiar with the views of the early Fabian Society. While his own theory of socialism differed from theirs, Bernstein nevertheless shared many of the Fabian beliefs, including the notion that socialism could be achieved by

nonrevolutionary means. In a series of articles that first appeared in *Die Neue Zeit* between 1896 and 1899 and later published in the book *Evolutionary Socialism* (1899), Bernstein laid the foundation for a revisionist challenge to Marxist ideas that had long been regarded as sacrosanct. Above all, Bernstein’s writings were meant as a corrective to some of Marx’s fundamental economic suppositions—his theory of surplus value, for example—as well as to some of his a priori claims, such as his prophecy that, by virtue of its inherent contradictions, the cataclysmic end of capitalism was inevitable. From his own observations of general economic and political conditions at this time, for example, Bernstein concluded that class tensions were easing rather than intensifying. Instead of becoming increasingly poorer, Bernstein asserted that available statistical measures indicated that workers were generally enjoying higher living standards. By further arguing that the state should be used as a vehicle for abolishing all class privileges and promoting democratic rights, not just for workers, but for all groups in society, Bernstein also ran afoul of his colleagues in the Marxist-dominated sections of the German Social Democratic Party (known by the German acronym SPD) who maintained that the working classes alone should benefit from the advent of socialism.

Bernstein’s intellectual assault on the reigning orthodoxy of Marxist thinking set in motion a series of debates and discussions within the Second International that did not die down until the onset of the World War I (1914–1918). Leading the opposition to Bernstein’s revisionism were Karl Kautsky, the foremost interpreter of the writings of Marx and Engels at this time, and Georgy Plekhanov, the principal architect of the Russian Social Democratic movement. Both attempted to defend what they regarded as the core principles of Marxism by contending that Bernstein had failed to grasp Marx’s basic notions about the relationship between economics and politics and that the antirevolutionary policies implied by his revisionism rendered socialism completely unnecessary. In the former case, for example, Kautsky explained that socialism would come about, not as a result of the increasing pauperization of the working classes, but as a result of sharpening class divisions, which were inevitable and therefore unavoidable features of historical development.

In reaffirming their faith in the immutable principles of Marxism, Kautsky and other antirevisionists hoped that they could prevent socialism from deviating from its revolutionary path. Yet despite their commitment to this understanding of socialism, the fact is that the majority of groups affiliated with the Second International at this time were already pursuing reformist policies. In France, Spain, Italy, and even in Germany the social democratic parties preferred the ballot box to confrontational tactics as a means of advancing their cause. In most instances this entailed working in cooperation with rather than against the middle-class parties that dominated political activity in the various Western European countries where socialism had an important following. Thus, Jules Guesde (1845–1922), the leading figure in the Marxist branch of the French socialist movement, was so committed to the idea of achieving socialism through peaceful means that he advocated parliamentary collaborationism. Another key French socialist

in pre-World War I period, Jean Léon Jaurès (1859–1914), was equally convinced that theoretical concerns should be subordinated to the tactical needs of the movement. He therefore thought it possible to retain his commitment to revolutionary Marxism while at the same time promoting a democratic path to socialism.

There were other socialist thinkers around this time who did not necessarily draw reformist conclusions from their critique of Marxism. Georges Sorel (1847–1922) was a French socialist who had come to Marxism late in life. Within a few years of his conversion, however, Sorel was ready to reject the scientific pretensions of Marxist doctrine as well as the reformist policies of the French socialist movement in order to embrace a form of revolutionary syndicalism. In his most famous work, *Reflections on Violence* (1906–1908; English trans., 1912), Sorel set forth a philosophy of syndicalism that stressed the importance of violence (by which he meant rebellion against existing institutions) in the workers' moral and economic struggle against capitalism. According to Sorel, the revolutionary élan of the workers needs to be sustained by the "myth of the general strike" or poetic vision of the coming epic showdown between workers and their oppressors.

While Sorel himself was not directly involved in the working-class movement, his ideas contributed to the growing body of left-wing syndicalist theories that had been developing since the late 1890s in countries like Belgium, Holland, France, Italy, and Spain and that would continue to exercise a profound influence on trade union development in those countries until the outbreak of World War II (1939–1945).

Socialism versus Communism

The two events in the twentieth century that had the greatest impact on the course of international socialism were the World War I and the Russian Revolution (1917). The outbreak of hostilities in Europe in 1914 brought to an abrupt halt the numerous theoretical debates inside the socialist movement that had been raging up to that time. The war also dispelled the notion held by nearly all socialists that, irrespective of doctrinal differences, socialist parties everywhere were united by a common goal (the overthrow of capitalism) as well as by their internationalist outlook.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 that brought the Bolsheviks to power had even more far-reaching consequences for the development of socialism. First and foremost, it signaled an end to Marxism as it was generally understood by most socialists up to 1917. This was not least because the epicenter of Marxism was transferred from Western Europe to the east and would remain there for the greater part of the twentieth century. In its new surroundings, Marxism would be widely referred to as *communism*, a term that was adopted in 1919 by V. I. Lenin (1870–1924) and the Bolsheviks in order to distinguish their movement from the so-called infantile revisionist socialism that had come to characterize the Second International. With the founding of the Soviet Union in 1924, the division between socialism and communism was formalized and made permanent. From this point on, socialism moved along two very distinct paths. One was defined and

largely controlled by the Soviet communists and the other followed a course that was defined by the pluralistic socialist traditions of Western Europe. Because the story of communism occupies a distinct chapter in the history of socialism in the twentieth century, it is not our intention here to summarize the main features of that movement. Instead, we will proceed with our survey of European socialism after the advent of communism.

Socialism in the Interwar Period, 1919–1939

The trauma and physical destruction that resulted from the World War I created widespread political and economic instability in Europe. Established political traditions and practices were the first to be challenged in this uncertain environment, first by the communists who sought to build upon the revolutionary experiences of Russia, and then by radical right-wing factions and fascists, who set themselves against both liberal democrats and left-wing parties. In these circumstances, socialists of the social democratic variety fared poorly. In most countries, socialist parties had barely recovered from their setbacks during the war when they were met with crises caused by the aforementioned groups. On one level, the communists forced socialists to adopt either the Russian Revolution as their standard or the reformist model that still prevailed in most European social democratic movements. The result was disastrous in countries like Italy and Germany, where a divided left made the socialists and communists more vulnerable to their more unified opponents on the right. The fascists were particularly adroit at playing on the weaknesses of the socialists. By the mid-1930s socialists everywhere were either in retreat in the few democratic countries that had survived the aftershocks of the war or driven completely underground by the authoritarian and totalitarian one-party states that had come into existence across Continental Europe.

Socialist participation in the communist-inspired Popular Front was an electoral strategy during the mid-1930s that was meant to check the rapid advance of fascism and other antidemocratic movements that were gaining ground at this time. In both Spain and France, for example, socialists played a pivotal role in forging a political alliance that embraced a wide spectrum of left and liberal factions. However, in Spain the Popular Front government formed in February 1936 was short lived, as civil war broke out in July. In France, Léon Blum's (1872–1950) socialist-led Popular Front coalition also enjoyed only limited success between 1936 and 1938. In this brief period, Blum managed to push through a number of social reform measures, such as the implementation of the forty-hour work week, before his government succumbed to the pressures of its conservative and pro-appeasement rivals.

The outbreak of yet another general war in 1939 marked the beginning of a seven-year hiatus in the development of socialism. When the war ended in 1945, socialist parties found themselves struggling against a number of currents. On the one hand, they were confronted by the spread of communism throughout the greater part of East and Central Europe. The strangle-hold that Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) had secured over the postwar regimes that emerged in this region between 1946 and 1949 effectively smothered the development of any

independent socialist movement for the next few decades. Under immense pressure from Moscow, social democratic parties were forced to disband and amalgamate with the communist parties loyal to the Soviet Union.

Except in Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries—where social democratic parties were in the ascendant—circumstances in much of Western Europe also conspired against a general revival of socialism. The right-wing dictatorships in Portugal (Antonio de Oliveira Salazar) and Spain (Francisco Franco) survived the war and both governments maintained their ban on left-wing parties for the next few decades. The postwar difficulties socialism faced elsewhere in Europe were compounded by the onset of the Cold War. Because the political and economic stability of the pro-capitalist nations remained in doubt in the immediate aftermath of the war, socialism was generally viewed with suspicion by the electorate. This was partly because socialists in Italy and France tended to form alliances with the Moscow-oriented communists, and partly because of the growing dependency of many European nations on the economic and military support of the United States. In fact, the United States made it clear to the newly restored postwar regimes that, because Europe was now divided into mutually hostile ideological blocs, it would not tolerate the idea of socialists and communists forming government coalitions outside the Soviet umbrella.

There were further reasons why socialism failed to make inroads into the political arena at this time. One was connected with the cultural and ideological shifts on the liberal and conservative end of the political spectrum that had taken place in Europe since the Great Depression and World War II. The economic problems thrown up by the Depression had caused many liberals to revise their views regarding the state's role in the economy. The mixed economic model for capitalism promoted by the liberal economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946) gained currency at this time, and this trend in economic thinking was generally reinforced during the war, when the collectivist practices of the state were deemed both necessary and desirable by the majority of the population. At war's end, the consensus among liberals and conservatives was, at least for the time being, the state would have to play a major role not only in bringing about the political and economic recovery of war-torn Europe but also in sustaining the social welfare of the general population during this critical period of transition.

While the socialists stood to gain much from this development, they failed to win popular backing at the polls for policies with which they had long been identified. This was due in part to their own miscalculations—such as their insistence on forming alliances with the communists—and in part to the fact that the socialists' general political outlook was woefully out-of-date. With few exceptions, social democratic parties in Europe were reluctant to refashion the theoretical content of their political programs. For example, most still looked to the working classes (trade unions) as their main constituency and most retained a nostalgia and even reverence for the Marxist ideological underpinnings of their movement.

Despite these shortcomings, socialist parties continued to occupy an important place in the political arena. This was

especially true in countries like Sweden, where the social democrats (SAP) dominated politics for the greater part of the twentieth century, and in Great Britain, where the Fabian style of pragmatic reformism of the Labour Party has won out over other forms of socialism.

The cultural ferment associated with the 1960s and early 1970s helped to inject some new life into socialist doctrine. The left-wing radicals who spearheaded protest movements in this period turned a fresh eye to the historical and ideological roots of socialism. In doing so they helped to resurrect themes that had lain dormant for many years but that now appealed to the intellectually diverse postwar generation of leftists. Perhaps the most important of these was the question of women's role in the socialist movement. From its origins, socialist thinking had been concerned with the fate of both men and women. Yet, apart from Charles Fourier, August Bebel, Friedrich Engels, Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), and a handful of other theorists, socialists tended to ignore specific questions relating to sexuality and gender. Indeed, all of the classical socialists who addressed the woman question, such as Engels did in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), regarded women as proletarians in the household and thus did not, as twenty-first-century socialist feminists do, view gender as distinct from class. Fewer still thought it necessary to transform socialist practices so that they matched the profeminist rhetoric of their movement. It was against this background that a new generation of socialist thinkers began their campaign to infuse socialism with feminist values and beliefs. The research of socialist feminists like Sheila Rowbotham and other historians of gender revealed that women played a much greater role in the development of socialism than had hitherto been acknowledged. Up until this point, Flora Tristan (1803–1844), Vera Zasulich (1851–1919), Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), Alexandra Kollantai (1873–1952), Dolores Ibárruri (1895–1989), Clara Zetkin (1857–1933), Beatrice Webb, and other notable activists had rarely received the kind of historical attention that was commensurate with the contributions they had made to socialist theory and practice. For example, it was not until the late 1960s that the prominent role that Luxemburg played in the key debates and discussions within European socialism during the first decades of the twentieth century became widely recognized by the scholarly community. Beside making her mark as a theorist during the revisionist controversy in *Reform or Revolution* (1899), Luxemburg became famous during World War I for leading the socialist opposition to the war in Germany. By the time of her death in 1919, the year she helped spearhead an ill-fated coup against the provisional Weimar government, Luxemburg had also established a reputation as a critic of the authoritarian policies of the Leninist brand of revolutionary vanguard Marxism. While the theoretical differences between her and Bolsheviks such as Lenin and Trotsky should not be exaggerated, Luxemburg always stood for a more open and democratic interpretation of socialism than did her Russian counterparts. No less important was the light that gender-sensitive research cast on the role that anonymous women in the past and present played not only in building socialism through their participation in grass-roots associations but also in broadening female participation in the public sphere.

Besides seeking to revise the historical record, socialist academics, writers, and activists in the women's liberation movement were also interested in changing the attitudes and perceptions that the majority of socialist men held of women. Socialist feminists pointed out that, while most men endorsed pro-feminist principles, they nevertheless tended to see women in sexist terms. For example, few concerned themselves with issues—child care, birth control, sexual expression, among others—that directly affected their wives, sisters, mothers, and female friends. Nor were they alive to the second-class status to which women were consigned in the workplace, where gendered divisions of labor prevailed, and in society generally, where male dominance was both profound and pervasive. The degree to which socialist feminists were successful in their endeavors is hard to measure. There can be no question that their efforts to place the women's question high on the socialist agenda and their insistence that "the personal is political" contributed in a number of ways to the rejuvenation of the theory and practice of a doctrine that was increasingly out of step with the realities of late twentieth century society. Nonetheless, the legacy of socialist feminism is mixed. Though it failed to bring about the much sought after gender reorientation of a number of socialist parties, socialist feminism can be credited for greatly advancing the ongoing struggle for women's rights. Contemporary feminists are above all indebted to this movement for having raised society's awareness of the multiple ways in which gender relations affect the daily lives of everyone.

Socialism at the End of the Twentieth Century

In the closing years of the twentieth century, socialism experienced further transmutations. On a practical level, socialist parties tended to resemble each other more and more, though this was not necessarily due to a closer collaboration among the various socialist parties. Ever since the demise of the Second International in 1914, socialists had all but abandoned the idea of using an overarching body to coordinate the policies of the various national socialist parties. The largely inert bureau of the Labour and Socialist International (LSI) met for the last time in April 1940, and it was not replaced until 1946. The onset of the Cold War after 1948 forced changes within the LSI that resulted in the creation of a new organization, the Socialist International (SI), in 1951. Echoing the realities of the postwar era, the executive council of the SI made clear to all its members that it would "put an end to the equivocation of parties which want to belong to our socialist group while in fact obeying directives from Moscow." Apart from reaffirming the European socialist parties' commitment to democratic socialism, the SI provided intellectual and moral support to the socialist parties that had been forced underground in antidemocratic regimes of Western Europe or were threatened by communist influence in the non-aligned movement countries. It was particularly successful at assisting the resurrection of socialism in Portugal (1974) and Spain (1975) when democracy returned to those countries in the late 1970s. During the 1980s, the SI continued to expand its influence in Europe and in parts of the Third World, though, in an age when nationalist feelings greatly diminishes the spirit of internationalism, its relevance to the future development of socialism remains an open question.

Partly in response to the electoral successes of their ideological opponents on the right, during the mid-1980s socialists throughout Europe began questioning their longstanding commitment to socialization policies, such as social welfare and public ownership (nationalization). And though a small core of purists refused to abandon the transformative goals of their doctrine, the vast majority of socialists elected to office in this period believed that social justice and equality could best be achieved by adopting the principles and practices of neoliberalism. As a result, the notion of what it meant to be a socialist underwent significant revision, with some critics arguing that the pre-capitalist values of "credit card" socialists made them indistinguishable from their liberal and conservative rivals.

Those who belong to the generation of socialists alluded to here are widely known in the early twenty-first century as *social democrats*, a label that refers to their commitment both to parliamentary democracy as well as to the principles of market socialism. According to this model of a mixed economy, the government should play a role in overseeing the ownership of certain enterprises (e.g., utilities and public transportation) but would allow market forces to determine the allocation of their goods and services. While the social democrats insist that their policies are aimed at implementing the classic socialist ideals of social justice and economic equality for all, they do not subscribe to the age-old socialist belief that holds that the state should function as the sole vehicle for achieving these much-desired goals.

The theoretical and policy shift that were identified with the social democratic movements of the 1980s greatly contributed to a reversal of the political fortunes of socialist parties in several countries. In Spain and France, for example, the socialists dominated national politics throughout the 1980s. The ascendancy of the New Labour Party movement in Great Britain during the late 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century seems to have signaled a further shift of socialist doctrine away from its historic ideological foundations.

The rightward drift of socialism in the last decade of the twentieth century was given even greater emphasis following the collapse of communist regimes in East Central Europe in 1989 and the Soviet Union in 1991. With communist ideas largely discredited the socialists' doctrinal links with Marxism were completely severed. The intellectual preoccupations and foci of the post-Cold War era promise to erode further the core elements of socialist ideology.

It is evident from the foregoing account that socialism has been in a state of flux over the course of the past two centuries. Socialism in the twenty-first century cannot be located on the same ideological map that it occupied as a revolutionary theory in the nineteenth and greater part of the twentieth centuries. Whether it will continue to change or cease to exist as a distinct ideology remains to be seen. But whatever its fate as a doctrine, socialist ideas and values are so integral to Western political traditions that they will no doubt continue to find expression in an ever-changing political landscape.

See also Anarchism; Capitalism; Communism; Marxism.

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nineteenth century. African socialisms represent various combinations of African thinkers, politicians, and activists' absorption with and reconfiguring of nineteenth- and twentieth-century European socialist ideas and practice. The sources are multiple, from trades unions and contact with European workers, to affiliations with European political parties, and through contact with Pan-African (West Indian and African-American) radicals. Many African thinkers and movements have identified with various strands of social democratic and Marxian forms of socialism, seeking to indigenize them to Africa.

The rise of African socialisms as a movement coincides with the early phases of nationalism and national development, the high point of which was the non- nonaligned movement and Third Worldism. African socialism as practice began with the first self-proclaimed socialist-nationalist revolution in Africa, Gamal Abdel-Nasser's (1918–1970) 1952 Officers Coup in Egypt; and intended with globalization meeting South Africa's thwarted redistributive social democracy.

All African socialisms shared overlapping features that provided bases for nationalism and approaches to postcolonial development and nation building. First, was a combination of state ownership, an equitable distribution of wealth, and increasing citizen well-being; second, was the urgency of conquering underdevelopment, of "catching up"; third, was creating relevant noncapitalist institutions that would shape economic development; and fourth was creating well-balanced social relationships of citizenship that could establish cohesion between people and the state.

Prior to the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, socialist ideas and practices were mooted among sections of the African middle and working classes. The *Sierra Leone Weekly News* in 1913 compared union-based socialism in industrial Europe with the supposed hallmark of an indigenous socialism, African "hospitality," auguring in sentiments (and myths) subsequently invoked by African Socialist-nationalists and political leaders. Striking laborers and clerks in Lagos in 1897 had neither socialist ideas nor organization to mobilize them against low wage labor policy for Africans, yet African socialist movements begin with the development of a modern work force.

Where industrial capitalism had penetrated more deeply in Africa, as in South Africa, Egypt, and Algeria, burgeoning workers and trade union movements would become subjects of communist and socialist ideas. Established primarily by settler, expatriate or European unionists and intellectuals, these movements learned their socialism in metropolitan-based parties. Striking white miners between 1906 and 1907 and from 1913 to 1914 in South Africa would beckon the call of (white) trade unionism and socialist organizing and practice, as would black workers in 1918. Socialism's claim to social justice would uniquely shape South Africa's national experience, where a class divided by race would force the national question to the center of discussions about the nature of socialism and independence in South Africa.

The first communist party in Africa (and in the Arab world) was formed in Egypt in 1921, where textile and transportation workers became the subject of communist attention after

SOCIALISMS, AFRICAN. Socialist ideas have been in Africa before the advent of colonialism at the turn of the